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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka has a literacy rate of 90 percent despite a gross national product per capita of only $584. It has nearly 190,000 teachers of whom 50,000 were recruited between 1985 and 1995, working in 10,000 public schools (primary through college). Following the Hindu and Buddhist traditions of Sri Lanka, teachers are greatly respected and seen as important bearers of culture and values. The last four decades have seen great emphasis on reform of teacher development with nearly 71 percent of Sri Lankan teachers having received or completed professional training by 1989. All teacher recruitment and placement are done by the State Ministry of Education. Full-time teacher education is offered in four types of institutions: teachers' colleges offering three years of inservice training; colleges of education offering three years of preservice training; the National Institute of Education providing non-graduate and graduate training including distance education; and university and open university training for post-graduate diploma courses. Inservice teacher education courses are conducted through the National Institute of Education in coordination with regional departments of education. Master teachers are selected and trained to provide local inservice training. The most critical issues facing Sri Lankan teacher education are the quality of education provided to teachers and efforts to increase preservice education, and the need to allocate more financial resources, expand curricula, and adopt new teaching strategies. (Contains 27 references.) (JLS)

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Running head: SRI LANKAN TEACHERS' DEVELOPMENT

Sri Lankan Teachers' Development

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Sri Lankan Teachers' Development

Teacher education comprises wide perspectives including an understanding of the social economic and professional aspects of education, psychological and social theories underpinning pedagogical practice and knowledge of teachers' roles and their responsibilities. Dharmadasa (in press) found 109 teacher competencies grouped into 16 competency clusters under 16 major teacher competency areas as being necessary to be developed in an effective teacher. These 16 major teacher competency areas in the order of importance indicated by a composite sample of 360 subjects consisting of educational managers, university professors, teachers' college and colleges of education lecturers, Distant education tutors, postgraduate diploma teachers, trained teachers, teacher trainees and curriculum developers include (a) identifying the nature of the learner, (b) planning instruction, (c) developing desirable personality traits in pupils, (d) measurement and evaluation of pupil learning, (e) classroom management, (f) teachers' professional development, (g) use of instructional aids, (h) display of desirable teacher personality traits, (i) implementation of instruction in the classroom, (j) communication in the classroom, (k) developing school community relations, (l) organization and adaptation of curriculum, (m) involving in educational research and innovations, (n) management and organization of school activities, (o) providing guidance and counselling to children and (p) demonstration of knowledge in subject matter. It is the

function of teacher education programs to develop these necessary competencies in teachers for them to function as effective teachers in the classroom.

According to the world bank report (1996) "Sri Lanka occupies an unusual place in the relationship between education and national economic development. . . Although the GNP per capita is only US $ 584, it has a literacy rate of 90 percent the highest in South Asia and it's social indicators are those typical of countries with much higher incomes" (p.1). Sri Lanka has nearly 190,000 teachers out of which 50,000 recruited between 1989 and 1995, in public sector primary, secondary and collegiate schools (World Bank Report, 1996) which amounts approximately to 10,000. The government school system has a structure of 5 years primary, 3 years junior secondary, 3 years senior secondary and 2 years collegiate. The untrained non-graduate teachers and trained non-graduate teachers teach only in primary junior secondary and senior secondary classes, trained or untrained graduate teachers teach in all classes while only trained and untrained graduate teachers teach in the collegiate section. The untrained non-graduate teachers mostly teach in primary and junior secondary classes.

A teacher, in the present context, is a person deployed in an official capacity in a school for the purpose of guiding, assisting, directing, and facilitating learning to children (Dharmadasa, in press) and in the traditional sense a teacher is anybody who teaches something worthwhile which helps a person to

formulate and develop his or her character and personality to live a good life. According to the age old Buddhistic and Hinduistic traditions of Sri Lanka, the teacher is greatly respected, venerated and in fact worshipped by the learners; he or she is expected to be of exemplary character, exhibiting his or her learned nature and mannerisms to his or her students as a role model (Dharmadasa & Gorrell, 1995) and as a model of behavior as fulfilling or exceeding the professional duties and as being effective in producing students' achievement (Gorrell, Eavenson & Dharmadasa, 1994). In the Sri Lankan context, the teacher is an instructor, an organizer, parent substitute, value bearer and a welfare worker. Teachers in Sri Lanka are seen as 'a breed of men and women who will conserve all that is best in culture and traditions,' they are expected to 'forge ahead as agents of change' (Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 89) Towards Relevance in Education: Report of the Education Reforms Commission (1982) states that teacher (in the school context) should be exemplary in their conduct, they will be disciplined not only because they are always under scrutiny but because they are a member of a staff in an educational institute. "Teachers will be conscientious and methodical, fired with a sense of commitment, and conform rigorously to a regimen of work" (Ministry of Education, 1982, p. 89).

The last four decades have witnessed a great emphasis being made on reforms in teacher development programs in Sri Lanka. This effort appears to have borne fruits to a great extent as

nearly 71% of the teachers in service had completed training or were being professionally trained by 1989 (Dharmadasa, 1990). Until 1984 all teacher education courses for teacher development were conducted on an in-service basis. As the rapid expansion of the provision of education necessitated, new modes of teacher education were gradually introduced to the system.

Teacher recruitment

Teachers are recruited to teaching service at three levels in terms of their academic qualifications.

(a) General Certificate of Education-Advanced Level (G.C.E. A' Level): G.C.E. (A Level) graduates in all streams: Arts, Science, Mathematics, English, Commerce, Home Science, and Handicraft, are directly recruited to the teaching service.

(b) Pre-service trained teachers: G. C. E. (A Level) graduates are given 3 year-pre-service teacher education in elementary education, science and mathematics education, English education, religious education, home science education and physical education in Colleges of Education and are appointed to teaching service in different regions.

(c) Bachelors degree holders: Graduates from different universities in all relevant subject areas are appointed to schools as teachers irrespective of their knowledge or training in Education. The practice of recruiting G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) qualified graduates to the teaching service was discontinued.

Teacher training courses conducted in teachers colleges and colleges of education are residential and institutional programs,

one-year postgraduate diploma courses conducted by three universities are institutional while all the other in-service and pre-service courses are non-institutional either distance or part time teacher education programs.

All teacher recruitment and placements to 26 different educational regions in the country are done by the State Ministry of Education on the basis of comprehensive interviews in some cases on the basis of written tests and interviews. In the appointments of Advanced level graduates, their academic excellence and co-curricular and extra-curricular activities done in the high school and community development work done in their communities are taken into consideration.

Full-time teacher education programs are offered in four different types of institutions--Teachers' Colleges offer three-year in-service training courses, Colleges of Education three-year pre-service training, the National Institute of Education provides various schemes for non-graduate and graduate teachers including distance teacher education and three universities and the open university train graduate teachers for post graduate diploma courses. Different institutions operate according to their own institutional agendas. (World Bank report 1996). The table 1 summarizes staff and enrollment of the types of institution.

The total number of teacher trainees in all types of teacher training programs reached 67,000 in 1994, with 80% of whom (54,000) being enrolled in programs conducted by the National

Institute of Education nearly all of whom followed distance education.

Table 1

Summary of Staff and Enrollment by Type of Institution for Years 1993 and 1994

	No. and Type of Institution	No. Staff		No. Students		Student-Tr. Ratio	
		1993	1994	1993	1994	1993	1994
16	Teachers' colleges	311	367	4438	3180	14.2	8.7
10	Colleges of ed.	276	335	3877*	4244	14.0	12.7
1	NIE (Dist.Ed & other Tr.Ed.)**	2846	2746	49393	53901	17.4	19.6
3	Universities (Fac.Ed.)	105	160	3173	5605	30.2	35.6
		3538	3608	60881	66930	17.2	18.6

* Only 9 institutions with 2714 in full-time attendance in years 1 and 2, the remainder were engaged in full time teaching internships.

** Includes over 2,500 part-time staff working in different programs in over 250 study centers throughout the country.

(World Bank Report, 1996, p.8)

Sri Lanka's teacher education institutes-- colleges of education and teachers' colleges-- are distinct from the

country's universities, which provide the traditional academic subjects at the bachelors and advanced degree levels (Gorrell & Dharmadasa, 1988). Most teachers' colleges and colleges of education concentrate upon one particular discipline area. A uniform core curriculum has been developed for all teachers' colleges to follow, allowing for differences in missions where necessary, but otherwise expecting all students to be instructed in essentially the same subjects. The colleges of education has their own uniform curriculum distinct from that of the teachers' colleges.

Colleges of Education

The colleges of education were established in 1985 for the training of pre-service teachers recruited from among Advanced Level graduates within the age range of 18-22 years, on the merits of a comprehensive interview, in some cases on the results of both a test and an interview. In colleges of education the teacher trainees are expected to achieve an understanding of the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of the learner, the structure of the national system of education from historical and comparative perspectives, and the fundamentals of their religion and their cultural heritage, a thorough comprehension of current theories of learning and their implications for teaching, the goals of a national system of education and the specific objectives of the discipline in which they are specializing and acquiring a knowledge of the subject matter that they are expected to teach in the classroom (Asian

Development Bank, 1989). There are different colleges of education established for different specialized subject areas such as, primary education, math-Science education, English education, religious education, home economics education and Physical education.

All the colleges of education provide a residential teacher education course for the first two years of their training within the colleges. All expenditure on board, lodging and tuition is met by the central government. In the third year, when they follow the internship period in deferent schools they are given a stipend by the government. While in the colleges of education the trainees follow four broad areas of teacher education curriculum: Foundation/professional education, general education, area of specialization and unscheduled activities. Under the professional area they study psychological foundations of education, philosophical and social foundations of education, educational evaluation and measurement, educational guidance, trends in education, school and community, and educational practice. In general education they study mother tongue, English, religion and culture, hygiene and Physical education, and aesthetic education (art, dancing and music). As the area of specialization they are expected to select one of the following: Mother tongue, math, science, primary education, home economics, English, Physical education and religion.

At the end of three years a diploma in teaching certificate is awarded on the merits of the grading on the continuous

assessment scheme and grading on the internship performance, results of part 1 examination and part 2 final examination. The internship grading are awarded on the consideration of four components: (a) assessment of the principal where the trainee is posted to, on a five point scale, on general and routine behavior of the trainee within and outside the classroom and trainee's personality characteristics, (b) assessment of the senior teacher and the college of education professor under whose supervision the trainee works in the school, (c) assessment of the board consisting of principal, senior teacher and another teacher in the school on a five point scale on trainees interaction with others in the school, trainee's professional attitudes, community focused attitudes, and trainees overall performance as a teacher in the school, and (d) grading awarded by the college of education supervisor to the three projects and the essay that the trainee is expected to complete within the internship period (Colleges of Education, 1987).

The mode of delivery in colleges of education include: group discussions, brain storming sessions, panel discussions, seminars, debates, team teaching, role playing, simulation, lectures, observation, experimenting, discovery methods, micro-teaching, diagnostic methods, essays and projects (Ministry of Education, 1985). It is an effective feature in colleges of education that the "lecture method" has been very much discouraged as a method of teaching; instead the emphasis has

been given to group activities, discussions, seminars, project work and other discovery learning methods.

Teachers' Colleges

Teachers colleges continue to provide three-year in-service teacher education to a heterogenous group of untrained teachers with varying academic qualifications and teaching experiences in the school system. In academic qualifications they vary from those who possess the minimum G.C.E. (Ordinary Level) to those with higher qualifications such as G.C.E. (Advanced Level), diplomas in special subjects, and general arts or science qualifying certificates from universities.

The first two years in the teachers colleges are set apart for course work related to the particular trainees' areas of specialization and general education courses and in the third year they are posted to schools for the internship training. According to the Curriculum reforms in teachers' colleges: Special Committee Report (Ministry of Education, 1980) the areas of specialization at the teachers' colleges are selected based on their academic qualifications, aptitude and the needs of the teaching service. Specialized courses offered at present are aesthetic education, agriculture, Arabic, English language, handicraft, home economics, mathematics, science, physical education, primary education, religion, special education. Since a large number of graduate teachers with bachelors degrees were appointed to almost all the junior secondary and senior secondary schools, three programs namely mother tongue, social studies and

commerce were scrapped as areas of specialization for teacher trainees in teachers' colleges in 1985. Link language course was scrapped in 1983.

Once the backlog of untrained non-graduate teachers is wiped out these teachers' colleges are expected to conduct in-service education courses for the already trained teachers so that their knowledge, skills and practices may be continuously renewed and updated. Two other necessary course components are the teaching practice and the co-curricular activities.

Distance teacher education

The distance teacher education programs, at present, are conducted by the Department of Distance Education under the umbrella organization of the National Institute of Education (NIE). The first batch of students to follow the in-service teacher education courses in the distance mode was recruited during the latter part of 1983, although the preliminary work in the program commenced in 1981 (Jayasekera & Dharmadasa, 1985). The immediate objective of the distance teacher education program was to provide a professional training to a backlog of 35,000 untrained non-graduate teachers in the country's school system as expeditiously as possible. The distance teacher education programs sought to prepare teachers who would be competent to teach the primary school curriculum to the primary school children from grade 1 to grade 5, teach children in all streams such as arts, science, mathematics, commerce and home economics from grades 6-11 in the junior and senior secondary section,

provide recurrent and program based in-service education courses for practicing teachers, implementation of courses for educational administrators and supervisory personnel and the provision of supplementary support educational materials to the teachers in service (Jayasekera & Dharmadasa, 1985). The distance education program is an innovative approach to in-service teacher education in which a tutorial system brings continuity and support to the teachers while following a community based model (Tatto & Dharmadasa, 1995). Students spend at least three years on a part-time basis using carefully-designed, self-paced instructional material to develop their knowledge of subject matter content and pedagogy linked to their continuing teaching assignments.

The normal three-year distance teacher education courses are comprised of five components, printed material and other media 60%, assignments for submission 10%, face-to-face contact sessions 10%, local facilities 10% and practical teaching 10% (UNESCO/APEID, 1983; Distance Teacher Education, 1983). These courses are basically correspondence-cum-contact programs in which student teachers are sent self-learning material in modular form. The module is the most important basic lesson material used. The module is prepared based on the sequence of learning phases and related instructional events as developed in the information processing theory of learning by R. M. Gagne (1977) (Jayasekera, Amaragunasekera, David, & Jathunarachchi, 1985; Jayasekera & Dharmadasa, 1985). They study the modules and

complete the assignments given to them. They submit the completed assignments to the Institute of Distance Education for checking feedback and grading.

The student-teachers in a distant education program are requested to attend contact sessions held during week-ends and school vacations at respective distance education regional centers. The study material is given to students according to a pre-planned delivery schedule through the regional centers to which the students of respective educational district are attached. Trained Teachers' Certificates are awarded to successful trainees on the merits of three types of evaluation procedures, continuous evaluation, intermittent evaluation and final evaluation.

Teacher education programs for graduate teachers

The faculty of education at the university of Colombo and the departments of education at universities of Peradeniya and Jaffna prepare in-service graduate teachers for the post-graduate diploma in education. The post graduate diploma is awarded to the graduate teachers who successfully complete the two-year part-time course or one-year full-time course. The intake to these universities was about 600 per year. The faculty of education at the Colombo University, in addition to the diploma in education, conducts diploma courses in Teaching of English as a Second Language, community development and in psychological testing and assessment for graduate teachers in service.

The open university of Sri Lanka, too, conducts a two-year post graduate diploma in education course for untrained graduate teachers in the school system. The open university recruited about 700 untrained graduate teachers every year to provide professional training. The open university program covered the following subject areas: Principles of education, educational psychology, assessment of learning outcomes, student assessment and counselling, techniques of teaching, curriculum, school and society, comparative education and educational problems, educational administration and management and teaching practice Asian Development Bank, 1989).

As this intake to universities was too low to wipe out the backlog of about 28,000 untrained graduate teachers and the annual recruitment of graduate teacher cadres to the teaching service, the National Institute of Education under the management of department of teacher education commenced a 16-month post-graduate diploma course through 10 regional centers in the country. This course includes 5 interrelated units, (a) Core unit (subject areas): psychological foundations, philosophical foundations, social foundations and historical foundations, (b) Competency development unit: Teaching methodology and instructional management, (c) Career development unit: Curriculum development and school organization and guidance and counselling, (d) project: School based project and (e) Teaching practice: Four weeks' guided teaching practice (Asian Development Bank, 1989). The course is organized through correspondence lessons prepared

by the department of teacher education and contact programs organized by regional centers on week-ends.

Assessment is cumulative in character and not made wholly dependent on the final examination held at the end of the course units. The scheme of assessment includes, continuous evaluation 20%, project work 20%, teaching practice 20% and written examination 40% (Institute of Teacher Education, 1987).

In-service teacher education through Master teachers

A wide range of in-service teacher education courses are conducted by various curriculum committees attached to the National Institute of Education in coordination with regional departments of education. These courses of short time duration but planned on a continuous basis to phase out through the whole year are for teachers working in all grade levels. At primary level for grades 1-5 short time in-service courses are conducted in subject areas of language, beginning science, math concepts, aesthetic studies and English. At secondary level for grades 6-11 the in service teacher education courses are in language, social studies, English, science, math, health science, commerce, agriculture, home economics, life-skills, technical skills and aesthetic skills. At the collegiate level 12-13 in service courses are conducted in English, geography, physics, chemistry, Zoology, botany,pure math, applied math, commerce and finance, economics, accountancy, and language (Andarawewage, 1983).

The master teachers are selected on the basis of a written examination conducted by the National Institute of Education and

an interview conducted by the regional directors of education. Master teachers are trained periodically through contact sessions and workshops by a group of trainer-trainers selected from outstanding senior master teachers and specialists from other departments and universities organized by the National Institute of Education. The master teachers organize continuous in-service education for teachers during week days and sometimes on weekends, and not a one-time two-year or three-year-long in service education program which leads to the award of a trained teachers' certificate.

Teacher education for English language teaching

The Higher Institute of English Education (HIEE) under the umbrella organization of National Institute of Education is engaged in raising the standards of English Language teaching in Sri Lankan schools, teachers' colleges for English and colleges of education for English. HIEE is currently funded by the Sri Lankan government with aid from the British Overseas Development Administration through the British Council (Higher Institute of Teacher Education, 1986). It provides academic and professional training through a diploma course of one year's duration and later through higher degrees, provides relevant training for personnel engaged in implementing the English language teaching projects of the English Division of the NIE, provides a forum for discussion and dissemination of information regarding recent developments in the field, and undertakes projects in curriculum development and course designing and conducts research into areas

of applied linguistics and language teaching which are of interest to Sri Lanka (Higher Institute of Teacher Education, 1986).

Pre-service teacher education induction courses

This is a three-week short term teacher education induction course given to all untrained new recruits both at graduate and non-graduate levels. This intensive residential course given to new recruits who are given placements in schools consists of basic foundation material in educational psychology, educational principles, child psychology, teaching methodologies, teaching strategies for different subject areas, classroom management, and measurement and evaluation techniques etc. which would help the new recruits to develop some orientation about the teaching profession that they are about to join.

The pre-service induction course provided to the new recruits to the teaching profession largely helps to overcome the difficulties they face when making the transition to being a teacher. This course allows the new recruits to express themselves freely, discuss problems and issues openly and obtain appropriate answers to many questions they may have anticipated when stepping into a classroom as a teacher.

Intra-institutional in-service education

This is the type of teacher development programs that exist at school levels specially for teachers teaching a particular subject area. In schools there are subject committees which involve teachers teaching the same subject in parallel classes or

in different grade levels in particular sections primary, secondary or collegiate, under the leadership of a senior or expert teacher in that particular subject domain. The subject committees discuss various academic issues that the teachers come across in their day-to-day teaching activities related to the particular subject area. These issues may be related to the subject matter, lesson plans, teaching strategies, evaluation problems or teaching materials to be used. The exchange of information and experience about them in these committees lead to some kind of teacher education which would develop teacher quality in handling particular subject areas in the classroom. This method of school based teacher development has the advantage of peer learning, specially those pertaining to improving self-motivation and work ethos (Asian Development Bank, 1989).

The capacity to understand the students and work with them as their friends, guides, leaders and sometimes as their parent figures is one important characteristic expected of the faculty of teacher education. The characteristics expected of their faculty by the students (including teacher students) "revolve around a sense of professionalism in the teacher's (faculty's) attitudes and behavior. Sri Lankan students emphasized punctuality and regularity of attendance as characteristics of their influential teachers" (Gorrell, Eavenson, & Dharmadasa, 1994, p. 69) They also found that students often cite teachers who have influenced them being fair and showing no favoritism. Teacher students place a higher value to the faculties who act as

role models to them being exemplary in their character, behavior and attitudes toward them.

Issues and concerns confronting teacher education programs

Lack of a consistent policy on teacher education and a clear policy on teacher recruitment has been two important issues the Sri Lankan teacher development programs had confronted since a long time back. From time to time the policy of teacher recruitment, policy of teacher training and the nature of teacher training have changed particularly after independence. Each government attempted to introduce educational reforms to suit its political and socio-economic ideologies which contributed to a high degree of disorder in the system. During the last two decades the teacher training programs were subject to constant change. These changes were more ad hoc and were decided by a few at the policy making level (National Education Commission Report, 1995). The need of a national policy is considered and measures have been taken by the government in power to review the past, remedy the present and develop a national policy for the future (World Bank Report, 1996).

The shortage of teachers in certain areas considered as "difficult" (due to non-availability of sufficient transport and other facilities normally available in cities) has been a problem for a long time. To address this problem the teacher education sector has taken a few remedial measures to be effective at different levels. When teacher recruitment are done the prospective candidates are given the option to select three

districts, in order of preference, out of a list of districts in difficult areas, in which he or she likes to serve for a specific period of time normally 3 years. The second measure the teacher education has taken is to appoint teachers graduating from teachers' colleges and colleges of education to schools in difficult areas for a specific period of time (3 years). At the end of this specified period they are eligible to ask for transfers to districts of their choice. Thirdly, the teachers who are willing to serve in difficult areas are given incentives in the form of promotions, salary increases, allowances, government housing facilities, concessions for admission of their children to popular schools of their choice and convenience and a transfer to a school in a more congenial district after serving the specified period of time.

Provision of teacher development courses to a large backlog of teachers in service has been another critical issue in teacher education. Introduction of distance teacher education programs, introduction of teacher education programs for non-graduate and graduate teachers by the National Institute of Education conducted by the departments of teacher education and higher institute of English education, starting of post graduate diploma course by the Open University and commencement of two year part-time post-graduate diploma in education programs by faculties and departments of education in the three universities help in a great way the expeditious provision of teacher

education to a large number of untrained non-graduate and graduate teachers.

The most critical issue the Sri Lankan teacher education programs have faced is concerned with the quality development of the teacher education provided to the teachers. Various measures have been taken during the past decade to address this issue of quality development of teacher education in the form of: (a) recruiting competent and qualified teacher educators, providing them with necessary training and updating of their knowledge and skills by means of further education, training workshops and seminars, conferences and study tours to foreign countries (b) starting colleges of education for three-year pre-service training and three-week pre-service teacher education induction course for new recruits before placement to schools; (c) provision of more resources with additional central government funds and technical and financial assistance obtained from foreign sources; (d) effecting curriculum revisions to accommodate content areas such as community education, parent education, value education, aesthetic education, integrated curricular material for primary classes and school practices; (e) adopting new teaching strategies such as group dynamics, projects, seminars, workshops, simulations, micro-teaching techniques, micro-analysis, activity methods, educational excursions, community development projects, new techniques of communication and use of audio-visual teaching aids;

(f) introducing supervised system of internship training in schools and guided teaching practice lessons in schools;
(g) introducing continuous and systematic course evaluation and more stringent certification procedures. During the past decade a gradual transformation has taken place from the earlier emphasis of theory based teacher education to a more practice based teacher training (Dharmadasa, 1994, 1996) and also the public cry for an expanded and quality level teacher education which would in turn help to develop education that the children get in their schools has initiated and promoted a drive towards quality development of teacher education system in the country.

The Sri Lankan teacher development programs aim to develop a "whole teacher" with appropriate competencies in all three domains: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. The special emphasis made on the affective aspects of education as a whole and psychomotor aspects of education in the primary classes has been an important characteristic of teacher development programs in Sri Lanka. Value education has been promoted in both schools and teacher education programs. The importance placed on personal characteristics and ethical standards of teacher education faculty and generally of Teachers in the school system has been considered an important strength of the educational system in the country. The great traditions of Buddhistic and Hinduistic teachings on which the Island's 2500 years of cultural heritage has been strongly established may have had it's binding effects

on the total school education system and numerous teacher education programs.

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